

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel claims 1-13 and amend claim 14 as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous versions and listings of claims:

1. - 13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) A vegetation cutting machine comprising: a pipe-shaped operation rod; a motor mounted to a proximal end of the operation rod; a drive shaft extending through the operation rod and driven by the motor; a cutting tool provided at a distal end of the operation rod to undergo rotation with the drive shaft; a handle comprised of a bar mounted at a fixing point to the operation rod between the motor and the cutting tool; and right and left handgrips provided on distal ends of the bar, each of the handgrips comprising a ~~single~~ mounting portion at which the handgrip is fixedly mounted to the bar and which is in direct contact with the bar at a point located substantially at a center of gravity of a sum of a mass of the respective handgrip and a mass of a portion of the bar extending between the fixing point and a respective one of the distal ends of the bar, and a plurality of escape portions that are not in contact with the bar to reduce vibration transmitted from the bar to the handgrip, each of the handgrips comprising an elongated hollow

body in which a respective one of the distal end portions of the bar is received, the elongated hollow body having an inner circumferential surface facing an outer circumferential surface of the bar, the inner circumferential surface having a first portion held in contact with the outer circumferential surface of a part of the respective distal end portion of the bar and forming the mounting portion of the handgrip and a second portion extending contiguously from the first portion in a longitudinal direction of the elongated hollow body and being out of contact with the circumferential surface of a remaining part of the distal end portion of the bar, the second portion of the inner circumferential surface having a plurality of annular ribs projecting from the inner circumferential surface of the handgrip and spaced from one another in the longitudinal direction of the hollow body, the annular ribs having distal ends spaced from the outer circumferential surface of the distal end portion of the bar and forming the escape portions of the handgrip.

15. (previously presented) A vegetation cutting apparatus according to claim 14; wherein the motor is a gas-powered engine.

16. (previously presented) A vegetation cutting apparatus according to claim 14; wherein the motor is an electric motor.

17. (previously presented) A vegetation cutting apparatus according to claim 14; further comprising a throttle control lever mounted to one of the handgrips for controlling a rotating speed of the motor.